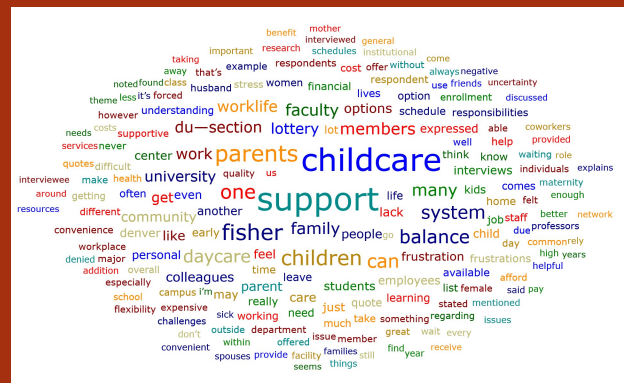
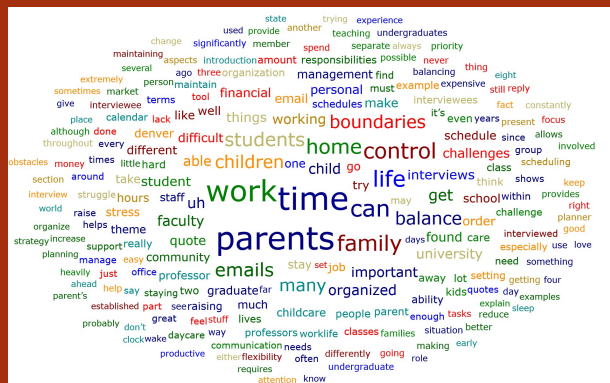
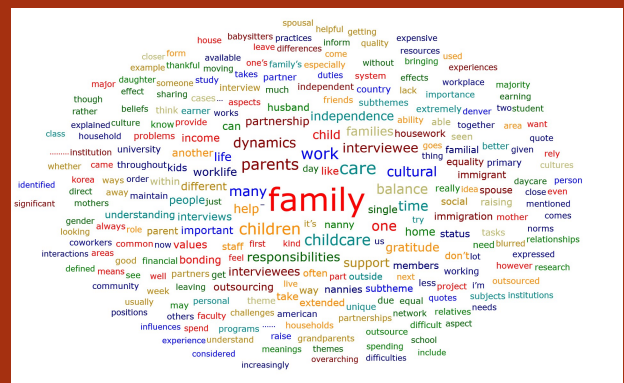
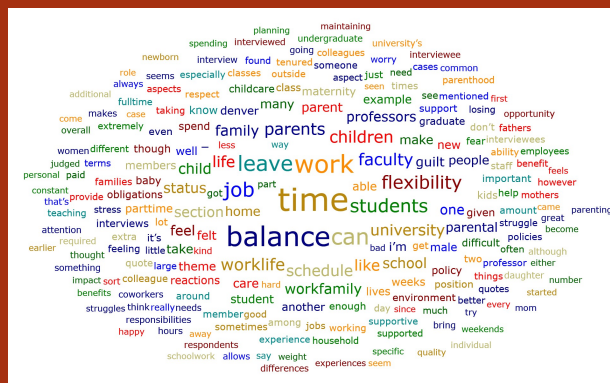


PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WORK/LIFE BALANCE AMONG DU COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN -SUMMARY REPORT-



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This summary report was prepared by Sarah Beck, Alexander Brewer-Fong, Samuel Churches, Kyle Cook, Emma Crisman, Dominique Italiano, Melissa Jackels, Elizabeth Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama and Nathan Weinberg, under the supervision of Alejandro Cerón.

The summary report is based on the following four reports that include more detailed findings:

The report for "Section 1: Work/life balance" was prepared by Isaac Auerbacher, Sarah Beck, Mckenna Benson, Maria Chavez, Emma Crisman, Harriet Dorion, Liana Franklin, Harrison Hardig, Jesse Jhan-Jing Hu, Sabrina Jain, Victoria Lang, Daisy Leach, Marcus Merritt, Evan Morsch, Tommie Walsh, Nathan Weinberg, Harry Zakarian, under the supervision of Cathryn Perreira.

The report for "Section 2: Family dynamics" was prepared by Sarah Alsharqi, Ryan Bell, Alexander Brewer-Fong, William Cassato, Kyle Cook, William Curry, Dominique Italiano, Matthew Marletta, Hanna Mikols, Katharine Paterson, Douglas Peterson, Nicholas Riggs, Connor Smith, Annie Vellon, Queen Wilkes, Natalie Wuertz, under the supervision of Elinor Brereton.

The report for "Section 3: Personal challenges" was prepared by Tristan Andersen, Logan Bell, William Buchman, Taylor Chinitz, Samuel Churches, Piper Friedman, Elizabeth Hamilton, Henry Hardy, Melissa Jackels, Mckenna Medina, Braden Neihart, Angelica Pacheco, Samuel Rickenbaugh, Jonathan Rohr, Stormer Santana, Jenni Sides, Caitlin Smith, Justin Wilhelm, under the supervision of Samantha Hagan.

The report for "Section 4: Support" was prepared by Tess Alphas, Zoe Briggs, Monique Domme, Mayra Espinosa, Ashley Gerken, Hanna Ko, J. P. Lawrence, Nicholas Lippman, Yvonne Maina, Gabriela Ortega, Traci Reese, Heidy Rios-Carmona, Erin Rissler, Eliza Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama, and Harry Wynn, under the supervision of Kristen Hall.

Executive Summary

Background: In the past fifty years, families in the USA have changed in configuration, size and dynamics. The percentage of families that do not conform to the traditional family unit (married mother and father with children) has increased as there are more single-parent families, LGBTQ families and interracial families. The proportion of unmarried or divorced families has also increased, as it has the number of married and unmarried couples that opt to not have children and, additionally, more couples are opting for adoption and foster parenting (Pew Research Center 2010). Furthermore, the percentage of households where all the adults work has increased, which impacts the amount and quality of time available for family activities and household chores (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). These and other trends have led to the identification of “work-family balance” as an important challenge of our times, one that families have been facing for decades and that institutions are only starting to pay attention to (Hochschild 2013). Although there are many aspects of family life that are challenging to balance with workplace demands, childcare has been specifically identified as one that needs attention (Desilver 2014).

Methods: *Study goal:* To describe the perceptions that some DU community members with children have about work-family balance with attention to challenges, difficulties and institutional responses. *Study design:* Descriptive, cross-sectional, qualitative study. *Population and sample:* We recruited 63 University of Denver students (13), staff (14) and faculty (36) who are responsible of parenting at least one child under 10 years of age. We used purposive sampling, which consists in actively finding individuals who meet the criteria. *Data collection:* Semi structured interviews (January 23-February 8, 2017), in person, audio recorded and transcribed within one week. Participants’ autonomy, confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the process. *Data analysis:* Thematic analysis, which consists in the systematic identification of themes in the interview transcripts, followed by their conceptual organization and hierarchization. *Research team:* sixty-six undergraduate students taking Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 2010) in winter 2017, four graduate teaching assistants and one course instructor.

Findings: Student participants portrayed work/life balance as set of interconnected situations and relations that go from the deeply personal to the interpersonal, communal and institutional. Aiming at capturing such complexity, we organized our findings in four themes: work/life balance, family dynamics, personal challenges and support. Participants told us about their struggles when negotiating work and life responsibilities which often lead to feelings of guilt, which are mediated by their colleagues’ reactions, schedule flexibility, their job situation and the presence or absence of maternity leave. Family dynamics reflected a tension between a narrative of independence and one of dependence in raising children, highlighting the importance of social networks, both of which are also affected by immigration status and intra-household negotiations particularly,

with their partners. Personal challenges relate primarily with time management and establishing clear boundaries between work and family, which related to managing emails, organization and scheduling of activities, maintaining a financial balance, and solving transportation needs, all of which were mediated the ability parents have of controlling a flexible work schedule, an ability greatly diminished among students. Support parents need related to child care goes from the one that happens in interpersonal interactions with neighbors, friends, relatives and colleagues, to the institutionalized forms of support, where participants expressed their frustration for the insufficiency of accessible options in Denver, the lack of options at DU, and the inaccessibility of DU's Fisher Early Learning Center.

Conclusions and recommendations: Participant's ability to control their schedules together with their financial and social capital seem to shape important differences in the ability that parents have for balancing work and life. Students, single parents and recent immigrants seem to have a combination of elements that add to the challenges. At the interpersonal level, simple acts of kindness, sympathy and empathy in the everyday interactions seem to make an important difference to parents. The perception that many of the student participants expressed about the academy not being comfortable with children, families or parents could be addressed by making it normal to talk about all these aspects of life. At the institutional level, efforts could be made at reaching out to parents, especially students and single parents, to offer them guidance and support that is already in place at DU, such as counselling and wellbeing resources, as well as orientation related to institutional policies. Policies related to maternity and paternity leave should be refined to ensure that they do not negatively affect those they are supposed to support. Convenient, affordable and sustainable on-campus child care options should be seriously considered given that they would enhance the possibilities for parents to participate in activities at DU. Events should be organized where members of the DU community have the opportunity to share not as students, staff or faculty, but as members of families.

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Introduction

This study is a product of the University of Denver's Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 2010) class. The creation of this study originated from the class's interest in unpacking the perceptions of work/life balance held by members of the University's community who are parents to children under the age of ten. Through structured interviews with various members of the University of Denver community who are parents to young children, including staff, faculty members, and students from an array of departments, our class was able to locate several similarities and common themes among the perceptions held by parents at the University. This ethnographic research was done through the process of data collection, coding, and analysis.

Before discussing those findings, however, it is important to identify how the researchers for this study defined the elusive concept of "work/life balance," the basis of all subsequent findings and assertions regarding those findings. For the purposes of this study, "work/life balance" will refer broadly to the concept of time allotted to paid work or work for school in association with time designated for non-work-related activities, including childcare and activities related to leisure. For our purposes, "work/life balance" is intended to capture a variety of subthemes, all intended to pinpoint the community's shared perceptions regarding how to balance the time spent on work and the time allotted for free-time and family activities.

To accurately capture the complexity of our findings, our researchers organized them in the ideas of Family Dynamics, Support, Personal Challenges, and Work/Life balance. Further, these concepts all include related subthemes that aim to form a more cohesive picture of the overall perceptions of work/life balance at the University of Denver, which will be discussed at a later point in this summary. These themes were not constructed prior to the semi-structured interviews that were conducted for this research, but rather were discovered from the content of these interviews. In other words, students conducting these interviews were not seeking out responses related to these themes, but rather allowed participants in the study to answer open-ended questions according solely to their personal beliefs and experiences. We were then able to examine the results and identify themes and subthemes in an unbiased manner to ensure that our categorization would accurately reflect the perceptions held by members of the University of Denver community.

The concept of work/life balance is particularly relevant today in the context of a culture that promotes individualism and increasingly emphasizes hard work as a means to success and happiness. As we will discuss momentarily, recent studies report changes in family dynamics, family composition, trends in the workforce, trends in the workload, as well as changes in the economy and in how parents balance work and life in the United States accordingly. These findings suggest that research on how people within this cultural context perceive and experience

these changes on an individual level is not only important but potentially crucial for identifying the needs of the increasingly-busy American juggling their work/life balance. Identifying the experiences and needs of parents in the University of Denver community can potentially reveal the changes within the institution that are necessary to effectively support all DU community members.

Background

Within the last 60 years, the image of the traditional family has drastically shifted from the two-parent nuclear household to a vast array of different family structures and living situations. These changes are demonstrated by trends observed and quantified over this time period. Both structural and functional changes in family composition, as well as workload, have the potential to impact the lives of all family members. Therefore, comprehending and identifying these trends is essential to understanding and addressing how modern families balance the different aspects of their lives.

Findings that demonstrate new trends in family composition since the 1960's are depicted in part by surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center. These findings identify changes in family structure, particularly increases in divorced couples raising children, unmarried couples raising children, single mothers raising children, and same-sex couples raising children (Pew Research Center, 2010). Additionally, it has been determined that while in 1960 nearly 87% of children were being raised by two married parents, in recent years this number has declined to only about 64%. In addition, they found that the percentage of children born to unmarried women increased from only 5% to 41% over the same span of time (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Just as the structure of the modern-day family has undergone drastic shifts within the past half-century, so has the roles of its members, particularly regarding the amount of work they undertake, including both household and workforce labors. Identifying these new trends pertaining to workload in addition to the trends in family structure is critical when examining the lifestyles of today's families, as they provide context for patterns in challenges that many families face in today's society.

One such change that has occurred is a large movement to include more women taking jobs and working outside of the home. This addition of women into the workforce has become much more common place, and continues to grow. This change lead to other observations pertaining to how the workload of parents has changed over time.

The book "Changing Rhythms in American Life" discusses workload trends of the modern family. The studies in this book show that the workload (specifically paid market work) of today's parents, both mothers and fathers, have increased over the last half-century (Bianchi, 2006). Parents tend to put in more hours at their jobs than they have in the past in order to help support

their families and provide luxury items in addition to necessities. Within this trend of increased paid market work, there is an even further distinction between fathers, mothers, and single mothers. It is shown that more women are entering the workforce, thus increasing their time allotted to market work, where as they were traditionally responsible primarily for housework and raising their children. It is also stated that this increase in market work is highest for single mothers (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie, 2006).

Aside from discussing trends concerning paid market work, *Changing Rhythms in American Life* also examines how unpaid work has changed over the last 50 years. In this section, the authors identify an imbalance in nonmarket work between fathers and mothers, with mothers having a tendency to put in more unpaid work hours than fathers. According to their findings, this disproportionate balance of nonmarket work has not changed significantly over the years, and while the overall workload of parents has increased, it is not due to an increased amount of nonmarket work. The relative amounts of housework and childcare for both fathers and mothers has stayed constant over the years. Yet due to increases in paid market work, workload has increased for both parties.

Overall, identifying trends in family composition and relative workloads helps contextualize the mechanisms modern families use in balancing their lives with their work. Research demonstrates that the aspects and perspectives on what constitutes a family have evolved, and continue to do so. Thus these changes in the structural components of the new “traditional family” have further societal implications. In order to understand these implications a foundational knowledge of how family composition has changed is necessary. In addition, the workload of parents has shown increases as time has gone on, thus further impacting the lives and challenges today’s families face.

The difficulties surrounding work/life balance for staff at DU are rooted in the economic context of America, which is constantly evolving. Modern family structure and the resulting challenges are a consequence of America’s long history of adapting to these economic changes. The changes in the economy are straining families in challenging ways, which is well described by Harris (1981) and more recently by various authors in the *Cultural ANTHRO2* textbook written by Robbins and Dowty in 2014.

In the textbook, Robbins and Dowty summarize the current capitalist economy as a credit based economy, which originated as a system in the USA around 1931. While money is often thought of as bills and coins, this form of currency actually only makes up about 5% to 10% of the economy, while the rest exists as figures, or in the computers of institutions, such as banks (Robbins & Dowty, 2014). Credit money can be promised from the borrower of money to repay the money plus interest at a future date. This means that as a country, the net growth of the USA money supply must increase yearly to account for debt money that requires interest payment

from debtors. Since the economy makes money with money, perpetual economic growth is a necessity. When this system failed in 2007, decline in GDP led to historic levels of unemployment, bank closures, and institutional collapse from which our society is still recovering. Neoliberalism became a dominating philosophy in the United States in the early 1970s to account for this threat, as it allowed for this perpetual economic growth by limiting governmental involvement. The reward is a system that provides all the materialistic desires of the modern capitalist at “low” prices, and continues to profit as well. Robbins and Dowty (2010) cite Catherine Lutz and Anne Lutz Fernandez, who note that these low prices have negative externalities, and point to the automobile industry as a useful example. There are many costs hidden within a car that quickly exceed the sticker price, including interest payments, insurance costs, and accidents, which for an average family totals about \$1,000,000 a year, but also road construction and maintenance, which are paid for by the same families through taxes.

The structure of American families has evolved to this changing economic environment, most notably by changing from a single breadwinner based income to a dual earning family. Harris (1981) describes this change starting in the early 1960s with consumer expectations aimed towards owning the many new or previously prohibitively expensive products such as dryers, washing machines, televisions, household furnishings, and automobiles (Harris, 1981). Purchasing these items pulled married women who previously relied on their husbands for money into the job market to supplement income. Married women's' work then became as much for purchasing power as it was for upkeep, even if at the same time it was linked to women's rights and liberation. Harris describes this as an “iron first inside the glove of planned obsolescence”, because what good was it to own cars or dishwashers that were breaking down? At this time, new seldom meant better, and old really just meant broken. The supplementary salary originally was more for essentials than frills and luxury items. While a novel strategy at first, a dual earning family quickly became the norm and capitalism maximized its profits, leading to today's situation. Nowadays it is almost essential for families to be dual earning, and from an economic standpoint, staying afloat while having children is difficult without the two incomes, which highlights the difficulties faced by single parents.

Having both parents working creates many challenges when raising children, but is now equally essential considering the costs of education, activities, essentials, and child care. The way that parents deal with these pressures is what constitutes their work/life balance. As mentioned above, Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie note the trend has been towards both parents working more hours on the job to offset the staggering amount of bills, as well as to fulfill professional and personal goals. On average parents continue to work about the same amount of time at “unpaid work” when raising children and maintaining the house. The way that parents balance these two types of work in their lives is their work/life balance. The question that remains is, what do we do with the kids when we're both working to pay the bills?

In Hochschild's "So How's the Family?" (2013) it is argued that the wall between non-market life and the marketplace has evolved to be largely permeable, and some families have chosen to show love for their children and manage their non-work lives by paying for a "Rent-A-Mom" to do it for them. This option has ironically opened up an entire field of jobs for moms that have entered the workforce that specialize in home keeping and sentimental family oriented activities. Another option that is increasingly necessary for dual earning families with children is child care. Families that are making enough money can hire a caretaker to fill the role left by the mother who is now part of the workforce.

However, in response to the cost of childcare, some mothers have chosen to forego their paid work to be a "stay at home mom", as their work is not profitable enough for them to pay for childcare (Desilver, 2014). This option serves as a strategy for parents who are against outsourcing childcare to a provider other than themselves. But this decision comes with an increased financial burden at the same time that it interferes in one of the parents', usually a mother, professional development. This burden is a consequence of the economic environment of the United States, and is a relatively new challenge for the modern families of 2017.

Methods

Study goal: To describe the perceptions that some DU community members with children have about work-family balance with attention to challenges, difficulties and institutional responses.

Study design: Descriptive, cross-sectional, qualitative study.

Population and sample: We decided to focus on "DU community members with young children".

- We defined "**DU community member**" as any individual who at the time of the study was a DU student (a person whose main activity and affiliation is being an undergraduate or graduate student at DU) and/or employee (a person whose main employment is with DU, in any capacity as faculty, staff or administrator). We excluded from this project people whose main activity was working outside of DU even if they are also DU students or employees.
- We defined "**with young children**" to include people with parenting responsibilities (financial, care, guidance, leisure, discipline, and others) towards at least one child under 10 years of age. This includes biological parents, stepparents, foster parents, divorced parents, single parents, and other categories as long as the individual is involved in parenting responsibilities.
- There is no available database that gives us an estimate of the number of "DU community members with young children", so the population size is unknown. In consequence, we used **purposeful sampling** (also known as purposive sampling or judgement sampling), which is the most common type of non-probabilistic sampling technique used in qualitative research,

and which consists in actively finding individuals who meet the criteria (Guest 2015: 234) described above.

- **Recruitment.** Each of the 66 students taking Cultural Anthropology in Winter 2017 identified and approached one individual who meets the criteria and who would be available for a 30-minute interview. The four Graduate Teaching Assistants and the Instructor advised and supported this process. Prior to recruiting them, participants were presented with a statement that summarizes the project, where we offered to protect participant's confidentiality, along with contact information for the instructor and the name of the student conducting the interview. **Informed consent** was secured verbally. DU's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs was informed of this project (see appendix).

Data collection: Each student conducted one semi structured interview (see appendix), audio recorded it and transcribed it within one week, a process that happened between January 23 and February 8, 2017. Audio recordings were destroyed after transcription. No personal information was recorded and audios and transcripts did not include any information with the potential of breaching anonymity.

Data analysis: Thematic analysis was performed, consisting of the following phases: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the preliminary report (Braun and Clarke 2006). Analysis was performed in groups, where students shared their interview transcripts and discussed collectively about themes and concepts that emerged from the data.

Findings

General characteristics of participants

A total of sixty-six participants were interviewed, but three of the interviews were discarded for the analysis phase of the study, due to low quality. Of the sixty-three participants whose interviews were analyzed, the majority were female, faculty members, between 30 and 49 years of age. Participant distribution by age, gender and type of job at DU are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. PARTICIPANTS BY AGE, GENDER, AND MAIN TYPE OF JOB AT DU

	20-29 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		TOTAL	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Faculty	2	1	8	2	11	9	1	2	22	14
Staff	0	1	7	3	0	3	0	0	7	7
Student	5	2	3	1	1		0	0	9	3
TOTAL	7	4	18	6	12	12	1	2	38	24
	11		24		24		3		62	

*One female faculty member declined to give her age

Participants' main academic or administrative unit of affiliation is shown in Table 2, where it is revealed that one third of participants came from the Division of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS), but the remaining are distributed in a variety of academic units.

TABLE 2. PARTICIPANTS BY ACADEMIC OR ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT AND MAIN TYPE OF JOB AT DU

Academic or administrative unit	Faculty	Staff	Student	TOTAL
College of Business	5	0	2	7
College of Law	0	0	2	2
Division of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	15	4	3	22
Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	7	0	0	7
School of Engineering and Computer Science	2	0	1	3
School of International Studies	1	1	0	2
School of Professional Psychology	0	0	2	2
School of Social Work	0	0	2	2
Other	6	9	1	16
TOTAL	36	14	13	63

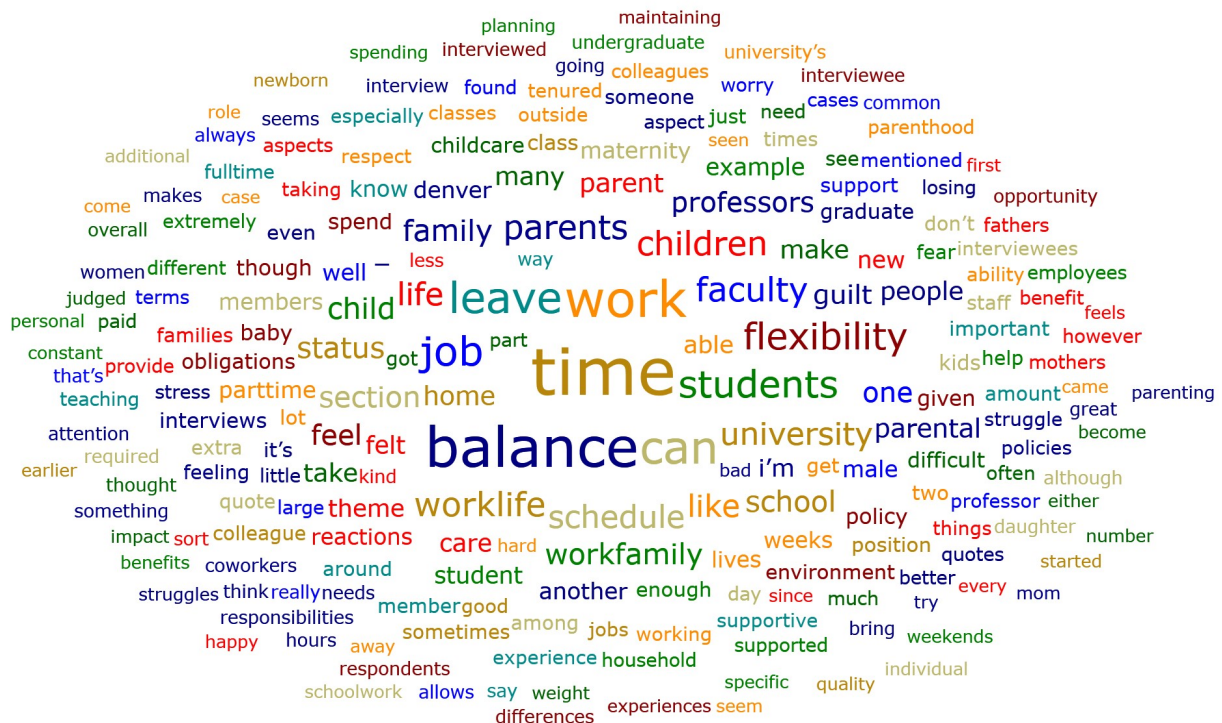
About half of the study's participants have spent less than 5 years at DU, as can be seen in table 3, where it is evident that the majority of participants with more than 5 years at DU are faculty members.

TABLE 3. PARTICIPANTS BY TIME AFFILIATED WITH DU BY ACADEMIC UNIT

Time at DU	Faculty	Staff	Student	TOTAL
Less than 1 year	6	2	4	12
Between 1 and 5 years	8	3	9	20
Between 5 and 10 years	14	5	0	19
Between 10 and 20 years	6	4	0	10
More than 20 years	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	36	14	13	63

Participants had between one and six children, with an average of 1.98 children per participant (standard deviation= 1.08, median= 2, mode= 2).

Theme 1: Work/Life Balance



Work / Life Balance can be defined as the ability that one must time manage and create a balance between their personal home lives and their work-related lives. In this study we specifically looked at students, faculty, and staff at the University of Denver who currently have children under the age of ten. These parents all had their own struggles concerning this topic, and each individual managed their life in different ways. This larger theme of Work / Life Balance was separated into five separate sub themes. These include Job status, Guilt, Maternity leave, Schedule flexibility, and Colleague reactions. Here, we briefly present these sub themes.

Many participants mentioned that having a child / being a caregiver does not interfere with their ability to be a successful and responsible student, teacher, or faculty member. One interviewee said that she had not had to miss work to participate in childcare activities, but her husband had, stating in the interview "I have been pretty consistent with my work. I haven't missed anything because of my daughter. But for example, my husband has missed some things or has taken her with him to class." There were some differences depending on the type of job.

Respondents from each category had individuals that felt guilt due to their inability to always be available for their child. The students stood out in this category. One student explained her guilt to her interviewer by saying that she is one of the lucky parents that is able to see her child every day, but she still thinks that she needs to spend more time with her daughter. The following is a direct excerpt from her interview; "It's definitely that guilt, like, that I'm not spending enough time with her. When, I mean, I know I spend a lot of time with her. Some people I know hardly see their kids, and I see her every day, even if she's asleep. I just have to keep telling myself and her that, you know, like "mommy and I will be around a lot more soon" sort of thing. And she's young, but kids get it, I think."

Participants talked about reactions from faculty and staff to the participant's parental responsibilities. For example, one woman said "I was afraid if I went on maternity leave that, um, they would try to get rid of me. Which they did try...Yah, um there was a, you know, there were other people who thought they could do my job, that sort of saw that as an opportunity. Um, so yah, I was uncomfortable about that." This shows that she was worried about what the University of Denver staff would do to the status of her job once she went on Maternity Leave, a feeling that was echoed by other mothers and which relates to vulnerabilities related to job insecurity.

Other participants mentioned the reactions students have to the participant's parental activities. This could be a student parent having to struggle with group meetings due to their child becoming sick, or a faculty member who cannot meet with their students because they must pick up their child from school. This can be seen in the following quote from a student: "And you know, it's like these horrible awkward times and I think some of that stuff you're just kind a like "Really?" And you can never say, "You know that's pick-up time. Would it be okay if we met earlier?" You

[illegible]

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The single most common topic discussed was the solutions that families found to deal with this seemingly unavoidable lack of time to both raise a child and fulfill work/ student responsibilities. Babysitters and daycare centers were the most frequently discussed solutions, but the opinions of interviewees on their use of these resources revealed somewhat contradictory results. What we found is that there seems to be two opposing social narratives that formed interviewees' opinions on childcare. The first stance taken was one of complete independence. Parents either expected to or wanted to assume all of the responsibilities of parenthood without any outside help at all. This seems to fit well into American culture which highly values independence and self-sufficiency. The second stance we observed was seemingly oppositional to the first: a desire for help and shared responsibilities across the family and larger community, whether coming from the help of babysitters or solutions provided by DU. This valuation fits perfectly into the proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", with the perplexity being how these two generalized opinions can equally be informed by American culture.

Parents who preferred independence in raising kids seemed to primarily do so to maximize personal bonding with their child. Regardless of other responsibilities, these parents viewed any time that their child spent with a babysitter (or non-family care taker) as a loss. One interviewee summarized this opinion, saying "it's not important to us that we have work carriers where we get to afford a nanny but we're missing out on having time with our own kids." These parents valued spending time with their kids above all else. The economic costs and benefits of outsourcing care typically become irrelevant for these parents who see time spent with their children as limited, and thus organize the family dynamic and work balance in a way that gives them time. Children often become the center of the familial unit and raising children can additionally be seen as something that parents must go through together. In this way, raising children also becomes an activity that parents and other family members can bond with one another over. Coded in the language used to describe these tendencies, there also seems to be an underlying suspicion of outside help as inferior to parental care. Parents are naturally protective of their children and such tendencies may also contribute to this desire to care for their children themselves. It is also necessary to discuss here the extreme costs of childcare services. Many interviewees discussed how it was simply not within their means to afford a babysitter or daycare center for their children. One parent explained that they made the decision not to hire a nanny because they could not afford to "economically" or "emotionally." The value of raising kids independently could also thus be in part a rationalization of the benefits of independence versus the costs of outside help.

While some parents thus exhibited a desire to raise their children on their own, what was striking was the extreme gratitude that parents who did have help from other family members, babysitters, and daycare centers showed. Aside from extended family, support networks are often drawn together from friends, neighbors, and coworkers. One interviewee explained their

relationship with their neighbor: "we have neighbor with children of the same age [as ours]. If you need to run one of them to the doctor because they cut themselves, you could call the neighbor. I don't see how people would do it if they were new to the city and they don't have that support network." The community thus becomes an extension of the family, helping parents with the responsibilities of raising their kids. In return, parents are perhaps expected to help other parents with their kids, or in the case of babysitters simply pay them for their time. It is also important to note that many interviewees explained that hiring a nanny would be too expensive for them and is not an option. While it's impossible to say whether they would be satisfied with hiring outside help, the frequency that it came up seemed to suggest that a significant number of parents who don't have sufficient outside help acquired with social capital (having neighbors or friends babysit) would greatly appreciate the option of hiring help at a lower financial cost. The need for childcare was not only to free up working time, but also often in order to do social things. Parents spending time together as a couple, and going out to have fun were also all reasons that parents need help raising their kids.

Another interesting signifier seemed to be parents' own childhood experiences. Parents often drew on their own experiences to decide what was right for their children. The varying cultures of different institutions also became an aid or an obstacle for parents to maneuver. One interviewee talked about how her previous job's work culture was much less tolerant of children, saying that "at my previous institution it was a Mid-Western institution and it was far less acceptable to mention kids or have kids be in your life at all. So, I do have a sense that academia isn't really comfortable with it yet my department has been really friendly and bringing their own kids to you know, the end of year faculty gathering or whatever you know it is." Once again, it appears parents are grateful to communities that are encouraging of parenthood.

There are additional mechanisms that seemed to significantly affect family dynamics and childcare. Immigration status was a recurring and contentious subject that had a significant effect on immigrant families. Families that are split up by citizenship are forced to endure additional hardships in raising children with a diminished social network to draw on. The dynamics between partners is also an important function that can determine what options parents have. While it seemed most parents shared childcare responsibilities relatively equally, divorced parents (or couples with a significant difference in wage-earning potential) often found alternative dynamic solutions. In all cases, families who lack the opportunities of child support are often forced to draw on the community for help.

In conclusion, although these two competing childcare narratives may seem contradictory, they not only coexist but affect one another as well. Economic realities, cultural values, and social capital (all largely informed by family dynamics) come together for different reasons to form both the social values of independence and dependence in raising children. Regardless of their stance

much organization they had to devote time to, and the result it had on their work/life balance. The financial balance sub-theme has to do with the income of the family. Factors that are discussed in the interview excerpts include whether both parents are working, how many hours per week parents work, if the family is living in financial comfort, and balancing enough hours during the week toward family. Control is a bit of a vague sub-theme but it generally refers to scheduling and how much control people have over their weekly work schedule. This includes when they can get time off work to deal with child care responsibilities, the ability for students with children can take classes, and the taking control of separating work time from family time. This challenge falls within the time management sub-theme and relates more specifically to how much control the individual has in what can or cannot be shifted around, such as when a class is taught or when they must be at work. Finally, the transportation sub-theme is also in line with the time management section. When a parent can pick up their kids, travel time to and from work, and the after-school activities the kids might need transportation to all must fit into one's schedule.

Time management and Boundaries are the two overarching sub-themes. As previously discussed, time management is part scheduling and planning, and part what must be done during the week that the parents may or may not have control over. This requires a certain amount of flexibility within the schedule and work environment. "I love teaching, I love reading, I love that stuff, and it all requires time so I constantly feel the tension between, either on a daily basis or a weekly basis, trying to find when can I really devote time and be present at home and not be distracted with work. So I get up at 5:30 and leave by 7:00 so I can get things done." This quote is in line with the boundaries sub-theme, and although it highlights making a clear distinction between work life and home life, the subject also mentions in the following quote how they must manage their time to make sure that distinction remains intact.

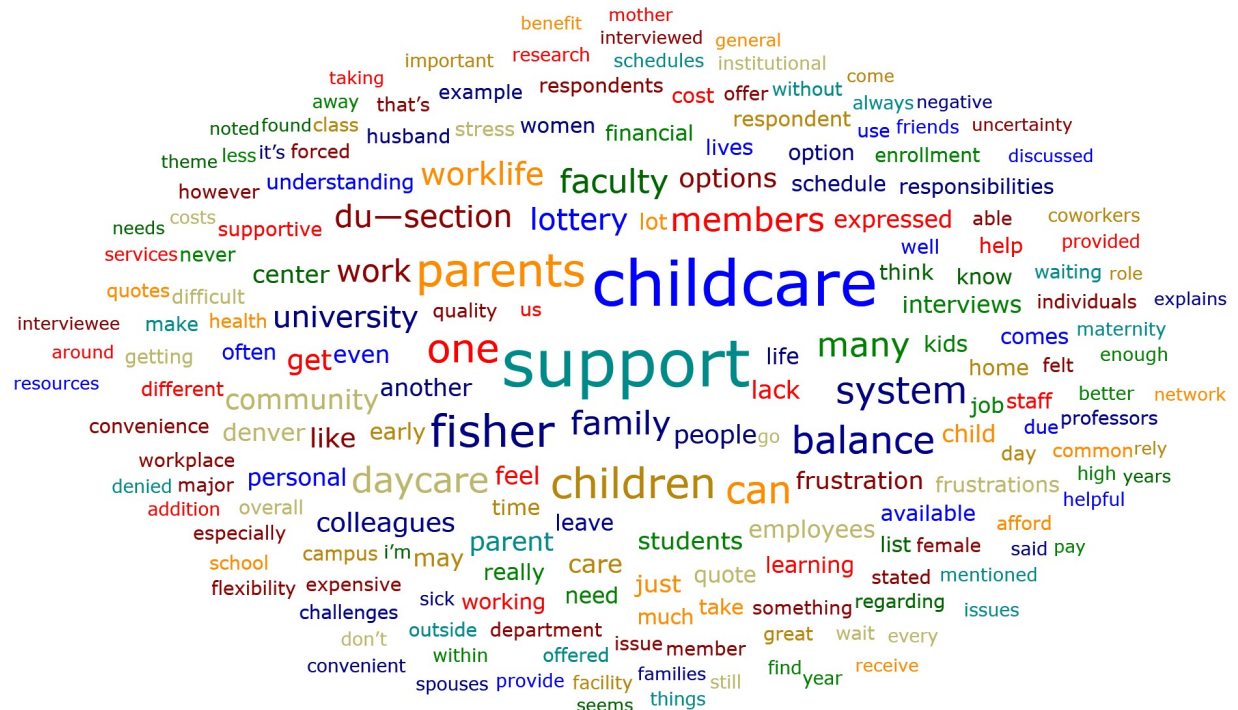
"Umm... (sighs). I guess the biggest thing [challenge] is to... when I am home with my kids and not working, or on the clock to not be looking at my phone checking emails..umm unless I know I am expecting something, uh but what I do is not life threatening (laughs), so um, I feel like I have set up good parameters to stop the clock when I leave here and not be working when I am at home and paying attention to my family." This quote falls in boundaries section and has an overlap with the emails section. These excerpts support the idea that that the goal is trying to keep the time spent on emails separate from family time, thereby keeping the boundary intact, and having specific times for responding to emails, which must be managed.

Boundaries are the efforts put towards making sure that the time allocated between work and family, by means of the time management aspect, remain intact. Thus, boundaries are the efforts made to make sure work and home life are kept separate. The challenge that individuals must face is that they inevitably mix to some degree. "So I've learned that before I became a parent as

an academic I would work like a college student so I would work a lot at weird hours of the day or on weekends. Once I had kids I really tried to keep it till 9:00-4:30 almost every day. When I was still trying to get this position and really had to publish to get that far I would work a lot more at night, lately I've decided that it's kind of not worth it". This quote is emblematic of most of the other parts of the personal challenges section and directly talks about when people work and when they spend time with their families.

These are some of the many personal challenges that parents face while trying to balance work and home life. Often sub-themes can be grouped together under Time management or Boundaries, or both. Differences between faculty, staff, and students most of the time are due to different amounts of control and transportation. The role someone has within the University determines the level of control they have available to balance their time at work or school. Personal challenges grow out of conflict between the time taken to work and time for family. This is the underlying challenge for every subject, but manifests itself differently in each of the themes and their sub-themes.

Theme 4: Support



Support is an idea that can be defined as something that aids an individual with the intention of helping improve one's quality of life. In our ethnographic study, our class interviewed both faculty

and students at the University of Denver with children ten years old and younger to gain a better understanding of the kinds of support these individuals receive and how support can be improved in their lives. Support is a broad topic that has several different parts to it, so we broke it down into different sub-categories which included: the DU daycare system, Frustration of getting into Fisher, Stress about daycare options, Frustration with lack of daycare options, A need for more personal support, A need for more colleague support, and Convenience.

As for the DU daycare system, our class was interested in learning about what options DU offers to students, staff and faculty with children to assist them in finding childcare, but our findings show that these options are narrow to almost non-existent. One respondent stated, "...as far as I know, there is not childcare provided for DU employees who do not get their children into Fisher."

Branching off that, there seemed to be a common theme among the different respondents regarding the frustration of getting into "Fisher", the closest daycare facility to campus. The Fisher Early Learning Center is a private institution that has a long wait list and uses a lottery system to enroll their students. Often times the faculty and students reported that they had to find different options for childcare, like one individual who stated: "We hire a private nanny who comes to our house...we couldn't get in the childcare here at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating..."

This frustration often led to stress about daycare options, which was a common feeling among the individuals interviewed. We found that being able to find affordable childcare was a main source of stress among parents, including one respondent who said, "It costs too much money and I am already having issues as it is...we are just trying to make sure all of the bills are paid and that we buy food and all of that stuff."

As a class, we also found that there was a significant lack of daycare options in general. Because of this, individuals would sign up for daycare wait lists as soon as they found out they were pregnant or have to pay huge amounts for childcare or a nanny. To sum this frustration up, one respondent said, "childcare is a huge, huge issue for every parent on campus...there's just not enough childcare options."

Along with the idea of childcare, a need for more personal support was also a common theme among the individuals interviewed. Personal support could be anything from emotional support to financial support to family support. A female participant stated: "He (referring to husband) is incredible and he is a lot of support, and he's like a feminist man so he understands that I have like a balance between my work." There was also a desire for more colleague support among the different students and faculty who we interviewed. Many interviewees reported that they felt a

lack of understanding from their colleges when dealing with work/life balance and the issues that arise with having a child at home. One respondent who stated that their colleagues were, “just supportive in general so I don’t feel condemned or an outcast or that I’m not pulling my weight” is what many other students and faculty members seem to want more of.

The last sub-category, convenience, is referring to the resources and/or strategies that make life easier for those in the DU community. These resources/strategies can be daycare facilities, transportation, family members, nannies, friends, etc. Convenience can be any of these things along with smaller things that make day-to-day life easier, like one respondent who said: “I have like a family calendar that helps me coordinate kids’ schedules and then my work schedule, meetings, just different things...”

Conclusions and recommendations

Although the aims of this study were not oriented at designing solutions to problems related to work/life balance, the picture that emerged from these interviews allows us to draw some conclusions and recommendations.

The experience of parents at DU reflects the trends identified at the national level, with work/life balance as perceived as an enormous challenge by people with children. Participant’s ability to control their schedules together with their financial and social capital seem to shape important differences in the ability that parents have for balancing work and life. Students, single parents and recent immigrants seem to have a combination of elements that add to the challenges.

At the interpersonal level, simple acts of kindness, sympathy and empathy in the everyday interactions seem to make an important difference to parents. The perception that many of the student participants expressed about the academy not being comfortable with children, families or parents could be addressed by making it normal to talk about all these aspects of life.

At the institutional level, efforts could be made at reaching out to parents, especially students and single parents, to offer them guidance and support that is already in place at DU, such as counselling and wellbeing resources, as well as orientation related to institutional policies. Policies related to maternity and paternity leave should be refined to ensure that they do not negatively affect those they are supposed to support. Convenient, affordable and sustainable on-campus child care options should be seriously considered given that they would enhance the possibilities for parents to participate in activities at DU. Events should be organized where members of the DU community have the opportunity to share not as students, staff or faculty, but as members of families.

Limitations of this study include: lack of statistical generalizability given the sampling approach, and our inability to present the dynamic nature of participants' perceptions given its cross-sectional design. Also, the lack of comparison groups does not allow us to confirm the extent to which these challenges are unique to DU community members with children or if they are shared by members without children.

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Appendix

Informed consent document:

As part of the Cultural Anthropology class I am taking this quarter, we are interviewing DU students, staff, faculty or administrators with children. The interview should take up to 30 minutes. We want to understand their perspective about work-life balance, its challenges and institutional responses. Your responses will remain confidential and I will not record your name or any information that could potentially identify you. I would like to audio record our interview so that I can be more accurate in documenting your responses. I will transcribe the audio by the end of this week and will destroy the audio recording. The transcript will not have any information that can be traced back to you. With the rest of the class, we will analyze qualitatively the transcripts and will write a technical report.

Would you like to participate in this project by allowing me to interview you?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the course instructor.

Instructor: Alejandro Cerón, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology (Alejandro.CeronValdes@du.edu; 303-871-2683)

Student conducting the interview: _____

Date of the interview: _____

Interview guide:

Student conducting the interview: _____ Date of the interview: _____

Interviewee's general information:

1. What is your primary occupation?
 - ☐ DU student
 - ☐ DU staff. Please, specify line/type of work: _____
 - ☐ DU faculty
2. For how long have you been at DU (as student, staff or faculty)?
 - ☐ _____
3. How many children do you have and what are their ages?
 - ☐ _____
4. How many adults participate in raising your children? (Are there other adults, such as spouses, stepparents, other relatives, nannies, or other who share with you these responsibilities?)

Perceptions about work/life balance among DU community members with young children

- ☐ _____
5. What is your age?
- ☐ < 20 years
 - ☐ 20-29 years
 - ☐ 30-39 years
 - ☐ 40-49 years
 - ☐ 50-59 years
 - ☐ 60 or above
6. What is your gender?
- ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Other, specify _____
7. Which division, college, or administrative unit are you primarily affiliated with? (DO NOT register the specific department you work at)
- ☐ _____
8. If you are staff or faculty, are you in a tenured or very stable situation, or are you on short-term contracts?
- ☐ _____
9. How do you maintain a work/life balance? What strategies do you use? (Can you tell me more? Can you give me an example?)
10. What are the main difficulties or challenges you face for maintaining a good work/life balance? (Can you tell me more? Can you give me an example?)
11. How do you go about childcare?
12. How do you distribute childcare responsibilities and tasks with other adults (such as spouse, stepparents, other relatives, nannies or other)? Are you the default person to be contacted by the preschool/school/nanny/coach/afterschool program in case of emergency?
13. What other resources do you have available to support you with childcare? (i.e. relatives, friends, drop-in day care, or other)
14. What reactions have you perceived at work when you miss work-related activities due to childcare related responsibilities? (i.e. snow day, child sick at home, childcare plans fall apart, or other situations). Work-related activities could be meetings, classes, workshops, lectures by visiting scholars, receptions, or other.
15. What support is available at DU, in terms of policies or other resources, which helps you maintain your work/life balance, specifically related to childcare? What other support would you like DU to offer to people with children?
16. Is there anything you would like to add?